

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

County: NEVADA

Applicant: NEVADA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Project Title: NEVADA COUNTY COMMUNITY SHADED FUELBREAK AND RIPARIAN RESTORATION PROJECT

Reference Number: SNC 070133

PROJECT SCOPE

This project would complete the remaining 30% (about 225 acres of net fuels removal) of the Nevada County Community Shaded Fuelbreak project, which was begun in 2004. [The 70% already completed has been accomplished with private landowners, U.S. Forest Service, and BLM.] The project area lies immediately east of Scotts Flat Reservoir, as well as north and south of the reservoir area. The total fuel break area is 15 miles long and is intended to protect several at-risk communities in a high fire severity area. The SNC-funded portion of the project also includes fuels reduction in a 9.5-acre riparian demonstration site, with reestablishment of native vegetation. Little riparian treatment has been done to date, leaving corridors through which wildfires can funnel with potential catastrophic impact to riparian habitat. In addition to reducing fire threat to the local communities, watershed and water quality and riparian habitat will be better protected from post-fire soil erosion. These water resources include Yuba and Bear Rivers, their tributaries, and Scotts Flat reservoir.

Activities for successful completion of this project include:

- Coordinate/contract with private and public landowners for implementation of treatment;
- Conduct biological surveys for riparian treatment area; develop soil erosion prevention plan;
- Contract for fuels reduction treatment / work with Fire Safe Council for chipping services as appropriate;
- Contract for riparian demonstration site fuels reduction work;
- Survey, map and document treatment work for development of educational materials, including before-and-after photography;
- Create a 12 page brochure with before and after color photos to provide information and guidance for landowners and contractors on how to work with riparian areas on their property;
- Send press releases describing project / disseminate educational materials;
- Provide site tour / develop and present a PowerPoint overview of the project to stakeholders.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Identify and hire Project Coordinator and Registered Professional Forester	June 2008
Identify and contact landowners for fuels treatment / Coordinate with Forest Service and BLM for work on public lands	June 2008
Complete soil erosion prevention plans for riparian restoration	June 2008
Develop conservation plans / contract with landowners	July 2008 – Dec. 2009
Before-and-after photography of treatment areas	July 2008 – March 2010
Purchase and install fuel break project signage	July – Sept. 2008
Complete pre-project riparian restoration plan and biological surveys	September 2008
Riparian restoration and post-project survey	Oct. 2008 – June 2009
General fuels reduction work	Oct. 2008 – March 2010

Work with Fire Safe Council for chipping services, as appropriate	Oct. 2008 – March 2010
Complete updated maps of restoration areas using GPS	March 2010
Complete riparian brochure and disseminate to stakeholders	March 2010
Public outreach, including press releases, tour of the firebreak area for interested parties, and information sharing	March 2010
Develop and present PowerPoint overview of project to stakeholders	March 2010
Final Report/Final Payment Request	April 1, 2010

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project management and contract coordination	40,000
Contracted Registered Professional Forester	60,000
Permitting (CEQA Negative Declaration and DFG)	7,500
Contracted fuel load reduction work (approx. 225 acres)	220,000
Riparian brochure production and printing	10,000
Contracted biologist	3,000
Administrative expenses at 12%	43,500
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 406,000

Letters of Support:

- Nevada County Board of Supervisors
- Nevada Irrigation District
- Fire Safe Council of Nevada County
- Nevada County Consolidated Fire District
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Yuba River Ranger District
- Nevada County Farm Bureau
- Cascade Shores Homeowner Association
- Bear River Watershed Group
- Wolf Creek Community Alliance

Recommendation:

This project is recommended to be funded at the full requested amount of \$406,000.

2. Project Summary:

Nevada County Community Fuelbreak and Riparian Forest Restoration Project

In 2004, several stakeholders in Nevada County created the Nevada County Forestry Committee to address educational needs and projects that focus on forest health and fuel load reduction issues. As a result, the Forestry Committee identified a strategic area in a very high fire severity zone for a Community Shaded Fuelbreak project that would add protection to several nearby communities as well as protect the national forest to the east from a catastrophic wildfire. There are several at risk communities near the project area.

The project area has not had a wildland fire in well over 60 years, has heavy accumulation of fuel loads and is designated a very high severity fire danger zone area by the California Department of Fire Protection (CDF). The project area encompasses ridge top parcels, mostly 10 acres and above, that have been strategically chosen due to fire weather wind patterns and the very high threat of a catastrophic, unstoppable fire. The project is also consistent with the Nevada County Fire Plan.

The Shaded Fuelbreak project is approximately fifteen miles long and up to one half mile wide and consists mostly of large parcel landowners. To date, the project is approximately 70% completed by private landowners, USDA Forest Service and BLM. The Fuelbreak project provides education to landowners, improves watershed health, improves forest health and reduces fuel loads, reduces soil erosion and protects water quality, enhances wildlife habitat and adds protection to a public recreation area and a public water source (Scotts Flat Lake).

Due to the complexities of permitting and environmental concerns, little or no riparian forest is being treated. This untreated segment of the landscape, during wildfire, can funnel up the riparian corridor and into unburned areas. This "funneling" of wildfire can totally obliterate the riparian corridor habitat and cause long term negative consequences as recently witnessed in the Angora Fire at South Lake Tahoe (July 2007). Therefore, the Forestry Committee has recognized the need for a riparian forest demonstration project as well as a guide for contractors and landowners for working near riparian areas.

This grant proposal would fund the treatment of the remaining 30% of the Community Shaded Fuelbreak, perform 9.5 acres of riparian corridor fuel load reduction and act as a restoration /demonstration project for how to work near riparian zones. In addition, a much needed landowner brochure would be developed to encourage understanding and awareness for working within riparian areas. Funding request to complete this project is \$406,000.